Plan (2002-2003 and 2003-2004), cumulatively, 2,28,783 micro enterprises have been set up and 2,21,005 persons, below poverty line, have been provided skill training.

Education after middle standard

†*277. SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that after passing out the 8th standard, every student is facing difficulty in getting further education due to shortage of schools in the country;

(b) the average number of children passing out 8th standard;

(c) the number of the schools upto 12th standard as on March, 2004; and

(d) the extent of their capacity for admission?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) No, Sir.

(b) to (d) According to the available information based on the latest (7th) All India School Education Survey, the enrolment reported in Class VIII during 2001-02 was 1.32 crores out of which 1.17 crores had reached Class IX in the year 2002-03. As on the 30th September, 2002, there were 46,137 schools offering education upto the 12th standard. The total enrolment in Classes IX to XII, as on 30th September, 2002, was 3.32 crores in these schools.

Demand of engineers in gulf

*278. SHRI RAJKUMAR DHOOT: Will the Minister of HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Indian engineers are in great demand in gulf countries due to construction boom on account of robust oil prices;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(b) if so, what would be the impact of exodus of Indian engineers on the country's economy and development; and

(c) the steps being taken to safeguard the national interest due to talent exodus?

THE MINISTER OF HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT (SHRI ARJUN SINGH): (a) to (c) No record of the number of engineers leaving the country is maintained centrally, though many do go abroad for employment or higher studies. According to the All India Council for Technical Education (AICTE), there is a demand for technical manpower both within the country and in the global market. There has also been continuous growth in the number of Technical Education Institutions. Therefore, any apprehension about the shortage of engineers in the country may not be well-founded. In the present scenario of globalization and liberalization, the movement of technical personnel across the national boundaries is not only inevitable, but in many cases could give positive benefits to the country. It is considered neither desirable nor feasible to put in place a regulatory framework to prevent the movement abroad of qualified engineers.

Change in patent law

*279. DR. (SHRIMATI) NAJMA A. HEPTULLA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are considering to make changes in the present Indian patent regime to make it compatible with TRIPS agreement; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and how Government are planning to protect Indian interest in WTO?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI KAMAL NATH): (a) and (b) In accordance with India's obligations under the Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights, the Patents Act, 1970 is required to be amended, effective from January 01, 2005, in order to introduce product patent regime for inventions in the field of food, drug or medicine and substances produced by chemical processes.

The Patents Act, 1970 as amended by the Patents (Amendment) Act, 2002 contains provisions relating to public interest, public health, nutrition,